

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Kindly amend claims 17, 18 and 20, as shown below, and add new claim 28.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

**Claims 1-16 (cancelled)**

**Claim 17 (currently amended):** A process for forming a stable, high solids content, partially aqueous composition containing reduced (*rho*-) iso- $\alpha$ -acids, comprising the steps, in sequence, of (A) heating a ~~concentrated preparation mixture~~ of reduced (*rho*-) iso- $\alpha$ -acids in their ~~undissolved free acid~~ acidic resinous form to fluid state, and (B) adding a concentrated aqueous alkali metal hydroxide solution to said heated ~~preparation of reduced (*rho*-) iso- $\alpha$ -acids mixture~~, with stirring, to form a concentrated, single phase aqueous solution containing ~~[[an]] a mixture of~~ alkali metal ~~[[salt]] salts~~ of said reduced (*rho*-) iso-alpha-acids.

**Claim 18 (currently amended):** The process of claim 17, wherein said concentrated aqueous alkali hydroxide solution is added to said heated ~~preparation mixture~~ of reduced (*rho*-) iso- $\alpha$ -acids stepwise until a substantially neutral or slightly alkaline pH is attained.

**Claim 19 (cancelled)**

**Claim 20 (currently amended):** The process of claim 17, further comprising the step (C) of cooling said resulting, concentrated, single phase aqueous solution of ~~[[the]]~~ alkali metal salts of reduced (*rho*-) iso- $\alpha$ -acids of step (B) to room temperature.

**Claim 21 (original):** The process of claim 17, wherein said concentrated alkali metal hydroxide solution comprises potassium hydroxide.

**Claim 22 (original):** The process of claim 21, wherein said potassium hydroxide comprises a saturated aqueous solution containing about 45 weight percent potassium hydroxide.

**Claims 23 - 27 (cancelled)**

**Claim 28 (new):** The process of claim 17, wherein said concentrated, single phase solution contains about 55 to about 85 weight percent of alkali metal salt of said reduced (*rho*-) iso-alpha acids.

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